

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
February 18 & 19, 2004**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on February 18, 2004 in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair Davis, Ed Barnes, Elmira Forner, George Kargianis, A. Michèle Maher, Dan O'Neal and Dale Stedman.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*It was moved by Commissioner Barnes, and seconded by Commissioner Maher to approve meeting minutes for January 21 & 22, 2004. The motion passed unanimously.*

**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY REPORT**

Randy Deer, CEA Design Visualization, WSDOT, shared that Department staff Terry Ness, CEA Design Visualization, Brian Walsh and Dave Sorenson, Highways & Local Programs along with Jay Burney, City of Olympia and Scott Spence, City of Lacey, received the Telly Award for their combined participation in creating the video "Driving Modern Roundabouts."

Secretary MacDonald provided an update regarding state and federal legislation. He briefly outlined the federal transportation appropriations process. He shared that a major highlight of the Senate's debate was Senator Patty Murray's success in increasing the size of the discretionary account. This account has been an important source of capital funding from the Surface Transportation Act for the Washington State Ferries.

Commissioners and Larry Ehl, Federal Liaison, had a brief question and answer period regarding the status of federal legislation.

Secretary MacDonald stated that Dave Dye, Administrator, Urban Corridors, is working with the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) providing input on its legislation. He explained that the role of light rail must be identified, and then it must be resolved whether or not light rail should be on the 2004 ballot.

Secretary MacDonald commented briefly regarding the Hood Canal graving dock site and the ongoing negotiations with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe.

Secretary MacDonald stated that the engineering study has been completed on the Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad (PCC). A segment-by-segment plan has been developed for the rehabilitation of the line. It appears that there is sufficient funding in the

2003 funding package for the project. A series of outreach meetings will take place in Eastern Washington Counties in order to solicit public comment on the value of preserving the rail service.

A recommendation will be made to the Commission at the April 14 & 15 2004 meeting. If the decision is to proceed, the next step would be to sign a letter of intent and negotiate terms of the operating agreement.

Secretary MacDonald shared highlights of the Department's safety improvement projects from the Gray Notebook. Data collected illustrates that safety improvement projects have improved highway safety. As additional data becomes available the safety project analysis will be updated and expanded. He provided a brief assessment regarding the status of the Department's pavement management process, and presented pavement conditions in comparison to national statistics.

### **TRI-ASSOCIATION UPDATE ON TRANSPORTATION ISSUES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

#### **Association of Washington Cities**

Tom Moak, President, Association of Washington Cities, provided a briefing to the Commission regarding city transportation concerns. He explained that transportation needs vary from city to city. He feels that cities need to have a state revenue stream to meet essential transportation needs, increase grant funding, and reinstate funding for local freight mobility projects. This in turn allows cities to actively participate in the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) and would re-solidify the local and state transportation relationship.

Stan Finkelstein, Executive Director, Association of Washington Cities, commented that the relationship between cities and the state have improved. Cities share with the state the responsibility of nurturing a healthy economy. Local officials feel that jobs are created when industry and businesses want to locate in desirable areas. Cities, depending on their size and location, face a broad variety of transportation needs.

#### **Washington State Association of Counties**

Bill Vogler, Executive Director, Washington State Association of Counties, provided an overview of local funding impacts that could result from Initiative 860 (I-860). He explained that I-860 could result in a 70 percent loss of the road fund. The Association does not take a position on the initiative, but has an obligation to inform the public of potential impacts.

Commissioner Mike Shelton, Island County, explained the distribution of county transportation revenues. He described his participation as a member of the Transportation Improvement Board.

## **STATUS REPORT ON DESIGN BUILD PARTNERSHIP FOR CONSTRUCTION OF UP TO FOUR AUTO FERRIES**

Mike Thorne, CEO, Washington State Ferries (WSF), commented on the progress of the redevelopment of the Seattle Ferry Terminal (Pier 52). Redevelopment is scheduled to begin in 2008 with completion expected by 2013. WSF has awarded the environmental services portion of the redevelopment contract to LMN Architects of Seattle.

Walt Neihoff, LMN Architects, narrated a conceptual video of the expansion of the Seattle Ferry Terminal (Pier 52).

Laurens Zuidweg, Director, WSF Vessel Engineering, provided a status report on the purchase of four new auto ferries. He explained that WSF's goal is to build new auto ferries that are reliable, efficient and environmentally progressive and that meet the needs of the riding public with a cost effective, competitive procurement process. WSF has set specific timelines for the various phases of the process, with construction of the first ferry scheduled to begin in June 2006.

Chair Davis recognized Mr. Cube, Senator Patty Murray's representative. Mr. Cube expressed his interest in the 2005 Federal Appropriations request presentation.

## **FEDERAL 2005 APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS**

Larry Ehl, Federal Liaison, WSDOT, provided an update on federal transportation appropriations. He explained that transportation interests advocate for spending levels, programs and projects throughout the appropriations. The Department reviews recent earmarks and prepares to deliver project requests to Congress.

## **COMMISSION ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

Jennifer Ziegler, Administrator, provided an update on the status of the Commission's request for a report on studded tires from the State of Alaska. She briefed the Commission on the status of current legislation, the Commission retreat and staffing issues.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION ON LEGAL MATTER**

Chair Davis closed the open meeting in order to conduct an executive session to discuss with legal counsel potential litigation to which the Commission or Department is, or is likely to become, a party.

Chair Davis called for a moment of silence to honor Pat Patterson. Mr. Patterson was a member the House and Senate, served as Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, and as a member of the Transportation Commission from 1994 to 1997.

## **FREIGHT AND GOODS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS (FGTS) 2003 UPDATE**

Charlie Howard, Director, Strategic Planning and Programming, presented the Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) summary.

The summary covers state and local roads that carry more than 4 million tons per year (T-1 and T-2 designations). The Commission adopted the first report in 1994. In 1998, the Legislature created the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) to designate strategic freight corridors and review and recommend funding for the most strategic freight mobility projects. FMSIB uses the FGTS information to designate statewide strategic freight corridors. The 2003 FGTS update contains the most up-to-date tonnage data available for state highways, county roads and city streets. At the March 17, 2004 Commission meeting the Department will recommend that the Commission adopt the 2003 FGTS Update.

## **UPDATE ON TRAVELER INFORMATION WEBSITE**

Laura Merritt, Interactive Communications Manager, WSDOT, provided the Commission with a briefing regarding the Department's Traveler Information Website that was launched on February 17, 2004. The website has now been expanded to include a beta version. Customer feedback has been very complimentary.

## **2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE**

Don Griffith, Legislative Liaison, provided an update on transportation legislation. He shared legislation highlights and provided a briefing on the status of agency request legislation.

Bill Ford, WSDOT, Budget Chief, reported that all of the Governor's budget bills have been referred to Committee. He reported that the Department is scheduled to have a budget work session with the House, and that budget bills will begin moving in a week.

## **FREIGHT MOBILITY NEEDS OF WASHINGTON PORTS**

Jeannie Beckett, Senior Director, Inland Transportation, Port of Tacoma, briefed the Commission regarding the economic value of the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma as load centers. She explained that ports are valuable as two-way trade centers and generate \$48.2 billion dollars per year.

Charles Sheldon, Seattle Seaport, Port of Seattle, stated that the Port of Seattle's history over the last 20 years has been one of innovation and progress. Container technology has been a valuable investment to Puget Sound. He explained that rail infrastructure needs a greater investment in Washington State.

Doug Ljungren, Business Planning Manager, Port of Tacoma, stated that the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma share competitive challenges as load centers. Specifically, West Coast

international trade is a growing business and major competitors have effectively formed business partnerships that would divert shipments by rail through British Columbia or to the East Coast. Puget Sound has many advantages for shippers and if problems are solved there would be tremendous benefits.

Mr. Sheldon stated that the next step would be to include freight mobility in the Department's future planning, cooperative research efforts, educating the public, conveying to the Legislature the economic value of the international freight mobility system and identifying a dedicated funding source for international freight projects.

Ms. Beckett commented that the Ports are working with railroads in order to increase shipping capacities to the highest level. Ports also recognize the importance of prominent state agency advocates for freight issues.

### **UPDATE ON PROPOSED TRAFFIC CONGESTION RELIEF LEGISLATION**

Amy Arnis, Co-Director, Strategic Planning and Programming, briefed the Commission regarding two legislative proposals on Traffic Congestion Relief, Senate Bill 6736 and House Bill 3196. She explained the impacts of the proposed legislation on state revenue resources. The proposal does not raise taxes. A new account would be established and existing tax revenue resources, 5.6 percent of the existing gas tax, 20 percent of the existing gross weight fees on trucks and the sales tax on vehicles equal to 2 percent of the selling price, would be redirected to the new account. These funds must be used exclusively on congestion relief projects that meet the criteria provided in the legislation.

### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

Commissioner O'Neal reported that he attended the Regional Freight Mobility roundtable and Puget Sound Regional Council meetings.

Commissioner Forner reported that she attended the Governor's Kicking Up Our Heels celebration, the Dryden Big Y intersection opening celebration in Wenatchee and an Economic Development conference in Richland. She also reported attending the Wenatchee Valley Transportation Committee meeting.

Commissioner Maher reported that she attended the Idaho County Transportation Summit, a Tri-Cities RTPO meeting and a QUADCO meeting.

Commissioner Stedman reported that he has been meeting with Department staff, where they are providing him with program overviews and outlining current issues. He also recently gave a transportation lecture at Eastern Washington University.

Commissioner Barnes reported on the status of various projects in the Vancouver area. He reported attending two Regional Transportation Council meetings and the Highways of Statewide Significance hearing.

## **GRAY NOTEBOOK PRESENTATION**

Daniela Bremmer, Director, Strategic Assessment, presented the Gray Notebook for the quarter ending December 21, 2003.

Secretary MacDonald stated that today's presentation would include an overview of each section of the Gray Notebook with a focus on project delivery and the Nickel Package.

John Conrad, Assistant Secretary, Engineering and Regional Operations, provided an overview of the Nickel Projects. Some projects may be funded using both pre-existing funds and 2003 Legislative Transportation Package funding. The Gray Notebook's Beige Pages include performance reporting on project delivery, project highlights, each quarter's progress and financial reports and program management topics as well as detailed information on key projects. Other important contributions of the Beige Pages are project completions, proposed adjustments, a project watch list and options for Legislative consideration.

Paula Hammond, Chief of Staff, explained the Beige Pages, Highway Projects: Proposed Adjustments to Project Delivery, are provided to the Legislature in order to demonstrate what the project was, what was budgeted and what the Department proposes to be the adjusted budget. This information aids the Legislature in the development of the supplemental budget.

Amy Arnis, Co-Director, Strategic Planning and Programming, provided a briefing regarding the 2003 revenue forecast changes, as well as, the impact from Initiative 776 (I-776). The current projected revenues over the next 10 years (for new funding sources) as forecasted in November 2003 by the Transportation Revenue Forecast Council compared the Legislature's assumed 'baseline' projections used in the budget-making process in March 2003. The November 2003 forecast includes several months of actual revenue receipt information. The forecast was slightly higher before taking into account the impact of I-776. However, when including the I-776 impact, forecasted revenues for license permits, and fees are down 10 percent for the 10-year period. I-776 did not impact the Multimodal account.

Dan Sunde, Assistant Director, Project Control and Reporting, provided an update regarding highway construction and project delivery. He explained that the 26 projects delayed during the second quarter were projects that were scheduled for ad in late fall/early winter of 2003. These projects were delayed approximately three months during the winter months when construction could not begin. Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring 2004.

Megan White, Director, Environmental Services, provided the programs annual update to the Commission. The Department is continuing to develop its Environmental Management System (EMS) to help support environmental efforts and integrate those efforts into everyday operations, training programs and regular performance reports. These efforts are building the Department's capacity to improve, track and report on environmental compliance.

Chris Christopher, State Maintenance Engineer, provided an annual update to the Commission. The Maintenance Accountability Process (MAP) is used to target, measure and communicate the outcomes of 34 distinct highway maintenance activities. MAP indicates that the 24 of the 36 targets have been met. Strong maintenance management results have been assisted by mild or average winter conditions and stable funding for maintenance for several years and have produced better across-the-board results. He briefly covered integrated vegetation management and herbicide use trends.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m., on February 19, 2004.

**WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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AUBREY DAVIS, Chair

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GEORGE KARGIANIS, Vice-Chair

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EDWARD BARNES, Member

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DALE STEDMAN, Member

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ELMIRA FORNER, Member

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DANIEL O'NEAL, Member

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A. MICHÈLE MAHER, Member

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DOUGLAS MACDONALD, Ex-Officio Member  
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

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JENNIFER ZIEGLER, Administrator